



MACOMB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

PLAGUE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What is plague?

- Plague is a bacterium (germ) that may intentionally be released into the air (bioterrorism) and breathed (inhaled) into people's lungs causing severe respiratory distress.
- The germ is naturally found in some mammals, especially rodents such as mice and squirrels, and can be spread to humans through the bite of a flea from an infected animal.

Can I get plague from an infected person?

- Yes. An infected person may spread the disease through breathing, laughing, or talking.
- If you are in contact with an infected person, you should wear respiratory protection such as a surgical mask.

How will I know if I was exposed to the germ?

- It will depend on how the germ is released, where it was released, and where you were in relation to the release site.
- The further away you were from the release site the less likely it will be that you were exposed.

How soon will symptoms develop?

- If the germ were intentionally released into the air, symptoms may start from 1 – 7 days after exposure to the germ.
- If you were bitten by an infected flea, symptoms may take as long as 10 days to develop.

What are the symptoms of infection?

- If you have inhaled the germ, you may develop some of the following symptoms: sudden onset of high fever, chills, headache, and a watery or bloody cough.
- Plague is a very serious infection, and should be treated as a medical emergency. If you feel you were exposed to the germ that causes plague and develop the symptoms listed above, go to a hospital emergency room immediately.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

How is the infection treated?

- If you have the infection, your health care provider (doctor or nurse) will give you an antibiotic.
- You will also be closely monitored to ensure that proper medical care is given to you.

How is the infection prevented?

- If the Macomb County Health Department determines that you were exposed to the germ, you will be offered an antibiotic.
- Even if you take the antibiotic, you may develop the infection.
- If you develop symptoms such as fever or cough while you are taking the antibiotic, you should go to the nearest hospital emergency room immediately.

How long should I take the antibiotic?

- You should continue taking the antibiotic for as long as it has been prescribed.
- The Macomb County Health Department will make frequent announcements to give you the most current information.

What should I do if I DO NOT have symptoms?

- If you do not have symptoms of the infection, you should continue with your routine daily activities.
- Please DO NOT go to a hospital emergency room unless you have a fever or cough.

How can I get health advisories or alerts?

- The Macomb County Health Department will make frequent public announcements about who should receive the antibiotic, how to take it and where to can get it.
- Listen to local radio and TV for more information. You may also visit <http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth> or call 586-466-7923 for instructions.

MORE PLAGUE INFORMATION

Plague : Michigan Prepares (MDCH/OPHP)
http://www.michigan.gov/michiganprepares/0,1607,7-232-42666_42882_42953-150596--,00.html

Plague (CDC)
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/plague/>

Plague Fact Sheet (NIAID)
<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/healthscience/healthtopics/plague/default.htm>

Call the CDC at **1-800-CDC-INFO** or **1-888-232-6348** (TTY).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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<http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth>